

Center for Global Education (CGE)
Travel Seminar Program Planning Checklist
Mexico

Mission of CGE

The mission of the Center for Global Education (CGE) at Augsburg College is to provide cross-cultural educational opportunities in order to foster critical analysis of local and global conditions so that personal and systemic change takes place, leading to a more just and sustainable world.

Pedagogy of CGE

The pedagogy of CGE is rooted in experiential education and the work of Paulo Freire. Our travel seminars are organized to give participants the opportunity to learn through experience, and then reflect upon and analyze these experiences. The basic principles of CGE educational philosophy include process (learning how to learn), community (learning in the context of community), content (engaging participants holistically), critical analysis (reflecting), and action (encouraging participants to be agents of change.)

CGE in Mexico

CGE has permanent faculty and staff in Mexico, as well as an office, classroom facilities and two guesthouses in Cuernavaca. Spanish language instruction can be arranged through Universal Language School, a separate organization, located on the same block as the guesthouses. Family stays can also be arranged during part or all of the stay in Cuernavaca or Oaxaca. CGE has experienced consultants who assist with the programming. Short-term programs are primarily offered in Cuernavaca, Mexico City, Oaxaca, Chiapas, Guerrero and on the U.S.-Mexico Border, although CGE is open to exploring programming in other areas. In sites other than Cuernavaca, participants stay in modest hotels or guest houses, or with families.

Programming at CGE Mexico

In light of our mission, all travel seminars include the following components: in-country orientation, including history and economy; health, safety, and cross-cultural adaptation; analysis/reflection every 2-3 days; and re-entry discussion before returning home. Programming is planned to include dialogue with leaders at both government and grassroots levels, plus visits, activities and speakers based on your themes and goals. CGE programming intentionally includes the voices of those who are traditionally underrepresented. Participants will be exposed to contrasting perspectives in order to enrich the depth of analysis throughout the seminar. Possible themes and visits include the following:

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ▪ Arts & Culture | ▪ Globalization & Trade | ▪ Indigenous Culture & Spirituality |
| ▪ Archaeology | ▪ Assembly Plants (<i>maquilas</i>) | ▪ Inter-Cultural Communication |
| ▪ Politics & History | ▪ Immigration/Migration | ▪ Women & Gender Rights |
| ▪ Education | ▪ Health & Alternative Medicine | ▪ Poverty |
| ▪ Environment & Eco-tourism | ▪ Human Rights | ▪ Social Work |
| ▪ Religion & Faith | ▪ U.S.-Mexico Relations | ▪ Zapatista Movement & EZLN |
| ▪ Agriculture & Sustainable Development | ▪ Trade Agreements: NAFTA & FTAA | ▪ Indigenous Rights & Ethnic Groups |

Program Planning

You will be working directly with our in-country faculty and staff on your program. In order to help us plan activities, visits and travel that support the goals of your travel seminar, please complete the following checklist with as much detail as possible. The map on the reverse side will help orient you to the geography of the region, and to the location of possible visits. Key cities and destinations are described on the last page.

Mexico Checklist:

While our trips are customized to your interests, there are standard themes included in all seminars. Standard visits are checked. Additional visits are grouped by theme or topic area. We recommend 2 visits per full program day. Spanish language instruction and/or staying with families count as one "visit" per day.

This is just a sample of the visits that can be arranged! **Check one or more circles** for the MAIN focus of your trip. **Mark any of the boxes** for your visits - 1 for a priority visit and 2 for a preferred visit. Please leave blank the visits that hold limited interest.

Host Families

_____ Number of Days

Arts and Culture

- Visit to pre-Hispanic pyramids
- Mexican murals
- Museums on indigenous/Mexican history
- Salsa dance class
- Nightlife (please specify): _____
- Other: _____

Family and Gender Issues

- Visit the home of a family living in a poor urban community
- Meet with Mexican feminists
- Meet with grassroots women's organizations in rural or urban contexts
- Meet with LGBT activists
- Meet with men about gender issues
- Meet with Mexican academics working on gender issues

U.S. – Mexican Relations and Immigration

- Meet with Mexican government officials
- Talk with representatives of the U.S. Embassy
- Meet with people who've gone to the U.S. to work
- Meet with families of migrant workers
- Other: _____

Spanish Language Instruction

_____ Number of Days

Politics and History

- Overview of current political and economic situation
- Meet with members of the Mexican elite socio-economic class
- Meet with representatives of major political parties
- Meet with women involved in party politics
- Speaker on the Mexican revolution and its significance today
- Visit to a former Hacienda from colonial period

Health Care

- Visit to a state and/or private hospital
- Meet with state health officials
- Learn about alternative medicine
- Experience a typical indigenous sweat lodge
- Overview of the Mexican health system
- Other: _____

Agriculture & Sustainable Development

- Visit to a rural and/or indigenous community
- Field trip to the countryside to experience the daily life
- Meet with indigenous peoples to discuss communal land issues
- Learn more about rural economics & agricultural production

○ **Religion/Faith**

- Attend a Base Christian Community meeting
- Meet with a liberation theologian
- Talk with a feminist theologian
- Visit a faith-based grassroots organization
- Participate in indigenous ceremony
- Talk on indigenous spirituality & cosmo-vision
- Visit Evangelical &/or Pentecostal church
- Learn about folk Catholicism & religious syncretism
- Visit with faith based-NGO's working in development
- Discuss state-church relations and the role of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church
- Visit with faculty & students at the Protestant seminaries in Mexico City
- Worship in a local church: _____

○ **Environment**

- ✓ Presentation related to environmental issues
- Visit with local environmental activists
- Meet with government officials
- Visit ecological reserve
- Take an eco-tour of Cuernavaca & its ravines
- Visit a water treatment plant
- Visit Cuernavaca's industrial park & talk with business leaders about the environment

○ **Human Rights**

- Overview of current situation in Mexico
- Specific issues: _____

○ **Recreational Activities**

- Visit to national park
- Spend a day at a water park
- Tour the caves of Cacahuamilpa
- Visit the silver-mining town of Taxco
- Time for handicraft and other shopping

○ **Globalization and Trade**

- ✓ Cuernavaca Quest &/or Market-Basket Survey
- ✓ Visit and opportunity to purchase crafts directly from producers in the United Artisans Cooperative
- Presentation on the Mexican economy
- The effect of mega-projects in rural areas
- Talks on free trade agreements with people who have different viewpoints
- Visit to a factory (maquila or otherwise)
- Talk on debt, poverty reduction & the feminization of poverty
- Other: _____

○ **Education**

- Visit to public/private primary or secondary schools
- Meet with teachers and union members
- Visit NGO working on popular education
- Visit to a college or university
- Meet with university students
- Dialogue with university faculty in a specific discipline:
- Other: _____

○ **Mexico City**

- National Museum of Anthropology and History
- National Palace (Diego Rivera murals)
- Templo Mayor Museum
- Ballet Folklorico
- Visit Palace of Fine Arts
- Museum of Interventions
- Visit Mariachi square
- Visit Teotihuacán pyramid site
- Frida Kahlo museum
- National Cathedral
- Chapultepec Park
- Other: _____

Other Comments, Notes:

Key Cities and Destinations:

◇ **Cuernavaca:** Known as the "City of Eternal Spring", Cuernavaca is a tourist city with a population of about 600,000 inhabitants in the state of Morelos, the birthplace of the revolutionary leader, Emiliano Zapata. It is located two hours south of Mexico City in a valley surrounded by the Ajusco-Chichinautzin mountain range. Cuernavaca has a large floating population that consists of wealthy Mexicans who own vacation homes and many foreigners who come to Cuernavaca to study Spanish. Cuernavaca is characterized by a series of deep ravines, once filled with parrots, clean water, fish, turtles and guava orchards. Since the 1970s and the establishment of the industrial park just to the south of Cuernavaca, however, the city has become a regular destination for farmers from Guerrero who can no longer live off their land and people from Mexico City who no longer wish to live in the capital. As a result of rapid industrialization and unplanned growth, the natural environment has deteriorated and one can witness the extremes of great poverty and great wealth side by side in Cuernavaca. The Center for Global Education established Cuernavaca as its first program site in 1982, in large part due to the liberation theology movement existent there under the late Bishop Sergio Mendez Arceo in the 1970s and 80s, and the growth of alternative education led by the late Ivan Illich during the same time period. Travel seminars that visit Cuernavaca stay at one of two modest CGE guest houses located near the downtown area and often spend one or two days in Mexico City as well as one or two days in the Morelos countryside, known for its agricultural and floral production. Some of the most popular themes groups focus on in Cuernavaca include the church and social change & liberation theology, the environment, immigration, education, globalization, social work, gender and alternative health. Many groups also choose to include a component of service-learning, homestays and/or Spanish language study in their program.

◇ **Mexico City:** The most populated city in the world, the Federal District (D.F.) is a world of contrasts and the ideal place to witness great wealth alongside great poverty. The city has many wonderful museums, murals, urban parks, historical architecture, theatre, music and other types of cultural expression. The ancient city of Teotihuacán, where one can climb the sun and the moon pyramids, is located about two hours north of downtown Mexico City. The D.F. also has great diversity among its population since the capital attracts people from all over the country and from all walks of life. While the D.F. has excellent public transportation, Mexico City is infamous for its high level of crime and pollution. Due to the safety issues, heavy traffic and pollution, it is draining to spend much time in Mexico City with a group. CGE seminars that do go there usually do so with specific objectives in mind including visits to the Ballet Folklórico, museums or archeological sites of particular interest, or visits with individuals or organizations that can only be found in Mexico City. It is located two hours from Cuernavaca, seven hours from Oaxaca City, eighteen hours from Chiapas and about eight hours from the Guerrero highlands, via land travel.

◇ **Oaxaca:** At least 16 highly differentiated cultures presently live in Oaxaca, including the Zapotec and Mixtec ethnic groups. Oaxaca is a state with an extremely diverse geography ranging from the coast to the high sierras. Ten-percent of the capital city's inhabitants speak an indigenous language. In addition, indigenous villages surround the city and extend throughout the state. The Monte Albán pyramid site is one of the most impressive in Mexico. It is located about 30 minutes from Oaxaca City. Oaxaca is a coffee-producing state with active political movements in both rural and urban areas. The capital city has wonderful museums, colonial monuments, archeological sites, restaurants, Spanish language schools and other tourist attractions. Oaxaca is the site of well-known festivals such as the Guelaguetza dance festival in July and the Day of the Dead celebration in early November. The Isthmus of Tehuantepec offers unique programming opportunities due to active political movements, including the role of the Catholic church there and what some call a matriarchal society that exists among the Juchitecan people. Oaxaca is an excellent place for seminars focusing on women, indigenous & land issues, sustainable development & the environment, and immigration to the U.S.

◇ **Chiapas:** In the Mexican southeast, Chiapas is best known for its diverse indigenous culture, progressive church and more recently, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), which staged an armed uprising in January 1994. Today the Zapatista movement continues to be active in the struggle for indigenous rights and in establishing autonomous municipalities. Like Oaxaca, Chiapas' varied geography includes coastal areas and the high sierras as well as important archeological sites, such as the one at Palenque, close to the northern border with the state of Tabasco. To the south, Chiapas borders on Guatemala and many groups choose to combine visits to Chiapas and Guatemala in one seminar. The capital city of Chiapas is Tuxtla Gutiérrez, where groups sometimes spend one or two nights in order to meet with high-level state officials or visit the Sumidero Canyon. However, the majority of CGE Chiapas programming takes place in and around San Cristóbal de las Casas, the charming city nestled in the highlands and the colonial capital of the state. Chiapas is the ideal location for seminars focusing on indigenous rights, revolutionary movements, the role of the church in social change, and issues related to women, the environment & land.

◇ **Guerrero:** One of the poorest states in Mexico, Guerrero is along the Pacific coast. It is bordered to the northeast by Morelos and to the southwest with Oaxaca. It is about one hour from Cuernavaca. Guerrero is a very diverse state including such tourist attractions as the silver-mining town of Taxco, the coastal resorts of Acapulco & Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, as well as extremely poor communities due in part to a large farming population which depends on precarious seasonal agriculture. Guerrero is known within Mexico as a state with extraordinary political violence as evidenced by the Aguas Blancas massacre in the mid-1990s, a long history of guerrilla activity and authoritarian rule by political bosses. CGE conducts its Guerrero programming primarily in the mountain region of Guerrero in Tlapa, one of the poorest areas in Mexico. In this region, the indigenous people make up 85% of the total population, including the Nahuatl, Mixtec and Tlapaneco ethnic groups. Poor soil and low technological development combined with the impact of globalization have made it very difficult for the rural population to survive. Consequently, high rates of migration to other parts of Mexico including Morelos, Mexico City and the border, as well as emigration to the United States, characterize this area. Guerrero is an excellent site for groups wishing to focus on the role of the church in social change, indigenous and agricultural issues, human rights, and immigration.